On October 3rd and 4th, the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) hosted its annual retreat at the Wachusett Inn in Westminster, MA. The ICC is a federally mandated statewide interagency group comprised of parents, professionals and providers that advise and assist the Department of Public Health, lead agency for Part C, Early Intervention (EI) services. These “partners” are interested in the future of the Early Intervention system in Massachusetts.

Wednesday began with a warm welcome and introductions. A short “teaser” clip of the video “Historical Evolution of Early Intervention System” was played. Ron Benham, Director of the Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition, welcomed attendees and kicked off the retreat. Kathleen Hebbeler from the Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECO), which assists states with the implementation of high-quality outcomes measurement systems for early intervention, presented via webinar from California, an Early Outcomes Presentation: Embedding Early Childhood and Family Outcomes into Practice. Her presentation was dynamic and very positively received. At the completion, Sharon Walsh, National Early Childhood Governmental Policy Consultant facilitated breakout groups and reporting out results.

Thursday morning was kicked off by Commissioner Sherri Killins’, Commissioner of the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). A complete viewing of the “Historical Evolution of Early Intervention System” video followed, featuring Ron Benham’s, historical recount of where Early Intervention has been over the last 30 years. Maureen Greer, Executive Director of the Infant Toddler Coordinators Association (ITCA) presented a Federal Update followed by a Federal Advocacy talk by Sharon Walsh. The retreat closed with a visit from Commissioner John Auerbach at which ICC parents presented the Commissioner with a token of their appreciation.

To learn more about the ICC and its mission, please contact Darla Gundler at darla.gundler@state.ma.us or 413-586-7525 Ext. 1157.

Recently I was invited to join the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) to hold the position of Parent at Large. My first meeting would be at the annual ICC retreat in early October. It was a huge honor to be invited to participate in such an event with other parents and Early Intervention professionals, as well as various representatives from the Department of Public Health and other state agencies.

The first morning was a bit overwhelming, but was made easier looking around the conference room and seeing familiar faces from the MEIC conference, which I attended last May, supported by the EI Parent Leadership Project, and from events with the Western Regional Consultation Program. This retreat focused on outcomes in Early Intervention. Having a child who has recently aged out of the program, this topic really hit home with me. It was an eye opening experience to get involved in the processes behind the scenes.

Liz’s Perspective
A Mom’s Perspective on the 2012 ICC Retreat
By Liz Cox, ICC Parent Representative—At Large
Liz’s Perspective continued

Over the summer I had the exciting honor of being appointed to the Massachusetts Early Intervention Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) as the Northeast Parent Representative. My first exposure to this role was on October 3rd and 4th at the Council’s annual retreat. It was there that I had the distinct pleasure of being surrounded by individuals doing exceptional work on behalf of young children and families, in a state, that I feel privileged to be a citizen of.

Over the course of this 2-day event, I learned about the rich history of the Early Intervention system in Massachusetts, about policies and funding on a state and national level, and about new and continuing initiatives throughout various departments and agencies relating to EI. The information delivered was as extensive and complex, as it was inspiring and thought provoking.

What impacted me most was how fortunate I felt not only to be given the opportunity to truly participate in this important “meeting of the minds”, but also to be the parent of a child with special needs in this time and place. During the presentation of the history of the EI system in Massachusetts, I was particularly affected by how much work has been done over the past 35 years for it to become the vast and effective life-changing organization that it is today. I was even more touched to know that many of the pioneers responsible for this growth and development were sitting around me.

The ICC Retreat truly illustrated to me the greatly respected role parents play in the Early Intervention system. There is, and will always be, more work to be done and more progress to be made. I was gratified to feel like I played such an important role when sharing ideas and reflections. It is my pleasure to be a participating member of the ICC and I look forward to learning and growing as a member of this important team.

Kristin’s Perspective

A Mom’s Perspective on the 2012 ICC Retreat
By Kristin Micalizzi, ICC Parent Representative—Northeast

Over the summer I had the exciting honor of being appointed to the Massachusetts Early Intervention Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) as the Northeast Parent Representative. My first exposure to this role was on October 3rd and 4th at the Council’s annual retreat. It was there that I had the distinct pleasure of being surrounded by individuals doing exceptional work on behalf of young children and families, in a state, that I feel privileged to be a citizen of.

Over the course of this 2-day event, I learned about the rich history of the Early Intervention system in Massachusetts, about policies and funding on a state and national level, and about new and continuing initiatives throughout various departments and agencies relating to EI. The information delivered was as extensive and complex, as it was inspiring and thought provoking.

What impacted me most was how fortunate I felt not only to be given the opportunity to truly participate in this important “meeting of the minds”, but also to be the parent of a child with special needs in this time and place. During the presentation of the history of the EI system in Massachusetts, I was particularly affected by how much work has been done over the past 35 years for it to become the vast and effective life-changing organization that it is today. I was even more touched to know that many of the pioneers responsible for this growth and development were sitting around me.

The ICC Retreat truly illustrated to me the greatly respected role parents play in the Early Intervention system. There is, and will always be, more work to be done and more progress to be made. I was gratified to feel like I played such an important role when sharing ideas and reflections. It is my pleasure to be a participating member of the ICC and I look forward to learning and growing as a member of this important team.

RESOURCES
THE PARENT LEADERSHIP PROJECT

The Parent Leadership Project was created to support parents whose children receive Early Intervention services. The Project's main goal is to promote lifetime advocacy, leadership skills and the development of an informed parent constituency, which will encourage Early Intervention services to be increasingly family-centered. The Project is a parent driven endeavor, which continually seeks family involvement and input regarding the needs of families enrolled in Early Intervention and is implemented by parents whose own children have received EI services. The Project staff consists of a Statewide Director, a Communications Coordinator, an EI Program Focused Monitoring Parent Coordinator & Education Coordinator and Collaboration & Outreach Coordinator. Please feel free to contact any of them with your thoughts, suggestions, and concerns.

EI Parent Leadership Project

Team
Darla Gundler
413-586-7525 Ext. 3157
darla.gundler@state.ma.us

Kris Martone-Levine
978-851-7261 Ext. 4057
kris.levine@state.ma.us

Faith Bombardier
413-586-7525 Ext. 3119
faith.bombardier@state.ma.us

Contact Us:
Toll-Free: 877-35-EI-PLP
Email: eiplp@yahoo.com
On the web: www.eiplp.org

Please consider completing our Survey Monkey Newsletter Survey

Like us on Facebook: Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project

Help us to save paper and postage!
Receive this newsletter electronically!
E-mail your name and e-mail address to: eiplp@yahoo.com. Thanks!

To receive the Parent Perspective Newsletter, a free publication, published four times a year or the Parent Perspective published at least two times a year, by the Parent Leadership Project, call us toll-free at (877) 353-4757 and ask to be added to the PLP mailing list or email eiplp@yahoo.com.

NEXT DEADLINE: We welcome your input and suggestions for resources and articles. The next deadline is January 30, 2013. Please call our toll-free number (877) 353-4757 or email the newsletter editor at kris.levine@state.ma.us.

The Parent Perspective newsletter is published by the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project, through funding from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. If you would like to be removed from this mailing list, please contact eiplp@yahoo.com.